



COUNCIL MEETING 11 MARCH 2024

Minutes of the meeting of Layer de la Haye Parish Council
Monday 11 March 2024, Queen Elizabeth Hall, 7.30pm

		PRESENT
Chair	Councillor Mrs M.A. Hughes MBE	Yes
Vice-chair	Councillor Mrs C Chambers	Yes
	Councillor Mrs S Bennett	No
	Councillor C.C. Chambers	Yes
	Councillor Mrs M Holmes	Yes
	Councillor Mrs S.E. Hughes	Yes
	Councillor I.P. Moore	Yes
	Councillor P.R. Pyke	Yes
	Councillor M Salmon	No
In attendance	Locum clerk, County Councillor K Bentley, 4 members of public	

The meeting commenced 7.35pm

- 1 42/24 **APOLOGIES** were **RECEIVED** from Councillor Mrs S Bennett and Councillor M Salmon. It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** these absences, proposed Councillor Mrs C Chambers, seconded Councillor P Pyke and agreed.
- 2 43/24 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** Councillor Mrs S.E. Hughes declared an interest in item 7c(48/24)
- 3 44/24 **MINUTES** - to approve minutes (previously circulated) as a true record, duly signed by the chair.
 - a) minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 12 February 2024 **RESOLVED** proposed Cllr Pyke, seconded Cllr Mrs S.E. Hughes and agreed.
 - b) minutes of the meeting of the council held on 12 February 2024 **RESOLVED** proposed Cllr Mrs S.E. Hughes, seconded Cllr Mrs C Chambers and agreed.
- 4 45/24 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
 - a) Reports from Ward: County Councillor K Bentley to follow up 'Horses' road signs on private land further to British Horse Society request. Folley flooding is being investigated with Planning to ascertain ditch owners, condition of verges, to check reparation work for solar farm development, change refuse lorries to smaller vehicles. Meeting to be arranged with developers and Highway engineers re: construction vehicles, check planning conditions, inspection, schedule. CCC local plan, concerns about further housing development raised by the Chair, meeting to be arranged.
 - b) Public comments: difficulty contacting recycling centre to order bins - Cllr Bentley to follow up; potholes - Cllr Bentley to contact Neighbourhood team zone warden; new voter photo ID requirement - Cllr Bentley confirmed that everyone registered to vote will receive information with their polling card.
- 5 46/24 **GOVERNANCE**
 - a) Confirm arrangements for year-end audit - **RESOLVED** to appoint J Stobart internal auditor, proposed by Cllr Mrs S.E. Hughes, seconded Councillor Mrs M.A. Hughes and agreed.
 - b) **RESOLVE** bank account administration - agreed to register the RFO as the main administrator for the Lloyds account, to consider switching to Unity Trust online banking.
 - c) Internal control review - to be completed by Cllr Mrs Chambers.
 - d) **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** NALC briefing on council email addresses and password security.
 - e) **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** ICO model publication scheme, proposed Cllr Mrs Chambers, seconded Councillor Mrs M Holmes and agreed. Template to be completed by Cllr Mrs S.E. Hughes and Cllr Mrs Chambers.
 - f) **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** Business continuity and IT reports. **RESOLVED** to purchase the new laptop proposed by Cllr Mrs Holmes, seconded Cllr Moore and agreed. Clerk to follow up email access issues. Cloud storage, new gov.uk domain/website/emails - **DEFERRED**
 - g) Councillor training schedule, new code of conduct training with MO - not approved.
- 6 47/24 **FINANCE**
 - a) **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** RFO report - it was **RESOLVED** to write off £45 allotment monies, proposed by Cllr Mrs S.E. Hughes, seconded by Cllr C Chambers and agreed.
 - b) Bank reconciliation for month ended 29 February 2024 was **APPROVED** signed by Cllr Mrs Chambers and Cllr Mrs S.E. Hughes and agreed.
 - c) Accounts presented for payment were **APPROVED** signed Cllr Mrs Chambers, Cllr Mrs S.E. Hughes, all agreed
 - d) **RESOLVE** HP business account new laptop (agreed), cloud storage (deferred), gov.uk domain/website/emails (deferred), IT invoice and ongoing support (agreed), PO Box (deferred).
- 7 48/24 **PLANNING - CONSIDER** the following applications or decisions presented to Council for comment:
 - a) 240297 Land at, Rye Farm, CO2 0JL - Cornerstone application for prior notification of proposed development by telecommunications code systems siting of a telecommunications base station comprising 21m high lightweight lattice mast with 3 antennas <https://www.colchester.gov.uk/wampd/?id=240297> **RESOLVED** to comment - reservations about visual impact however the village does need this signal, proposed by Cllr Mrs Chambers, seconded Cllr Mrs M.A. Hughes, and agreed - *draft to be confirmed*
 - b) 240404 - 62A Malting Green Road, CO2 0JJ - Single-storey rear extension and minor internal alterations to form larger kitchen and dining area <https://www.colchester.gov.uk/wampd/?id=240404> - No comment



Cllr Mrs S.E. Hughes was recused from the following item

- c) 240451 Nightingale Corner, The Folley, CO2 0HZ - Construction of part two storey part single storey extension to rear of property extending kitchen, utility, dining and living space at ground floor. At 1st floor a new master bedroom and dressing room <https://www.colchester.gov.uk/wampd/?id=240451> **RESOLVED** to object - large extension, over developed, not in keeping with rural surroundings, proposed Cllr Mrs Chambers, seconded Cllr C Chambers, and agreed - *draft to be confirmed*

- d) 232572 The Ridings, 240001 Winston House - awaiting Planning updates

8 49/24 **CLERK'S REPORT** - correspondence received

9 50/24 **OPEN SPACES** - parish maintenance, park gates quotes, tree felling - **DEFERRED**

10 51/24 **PARISH MATTERS**

- i. Denbury homes - play area: NIL
- ii. **RESOLVED** Heather Fields lease and rent increase, proposed Cllr Mrs S.E. Hughes, seconded Cllr Pyke, all agreed, duly signed by the Chair.
- iii. FOLS planned Easter Egg hunt, request for volunteers to help with the event - *Cllr Mrs Chambers*
- iv. CCC Local Plan review: NIL
- v. ECC EV strategy: NIL
- vi. Highways: potholes and parish road works - meeting to be arranged with developers and highway engineers.
- vii. Help with heating: [Home Upgrade Grant](#)
- viii. CCTV quotes and service contract **RESOLVED** to engage RJ Electrical Ltd, proposed by Cllr Pyke, seconded by Cllr Moore, all agreed, to include service twice a year.
- ix. Parish office use for community Constabulary pilot scheme **RESOLVED** to support this scheme proposed by Cllr Pyke, seconded by Cllr Mrs Holmes, all agreed.
- x. Newsletter in progress - assistance to print, fold and deliver - *Cllr Mrs S.E. Hughes*
- xi. 5-year plan - **DEFERRED**
- xii. CALC update Cllr Mrs Holmes attended 2 meetings, RCCE rural development, D day flag to be considered.

11 52/24 **BRIEF REPORTS OF MEMBERS** - painting wildflower meadow scene, grass cutting contract, allotment rental.

12 53/24 **NEXT MEETING** Monday 08 April 2024, Queen Elizabeth Hall, 7.30pm. Annual Parish meeting to be held 13 May.

13 54/24 **PERSONNEL MATTERS RESOLVED** pursuant to s1(2) Public Bodied (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 for public and press to leave the meeting due to the confidential nature of business to be transacted, proposed by Cllr Mrs Chambers, seconded by Cllr Pyke, and agreed.

- a) Participation in LGPS as published in the required notice 02.03.24 - It was **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council will participate in the Local Government Pension Scheme operated by Essex County Council on behalf of all employees effective from 01 January 2024; notice of this intention has been published on notice boards and the website, proposed by Cllr Mrs C Chambers, seconded by Cllr Mrs S.E. Hughes and agreed.

- b) Outstanding issues relating to previous employee - awaiting further information.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21.41.

Reconciliation of Accounts

INCOME FEBRUARY 2024					
Date	Payor	Description	Net £	VAT £	Gross £
01.02.24	Colchester CCC	Locality Grant BGC	1500.00	0.00	1500.00
01.02.24	I Moore	Multisport (Jan)	91.60	0.00	91.60
01.02.24	J Cooper	Tennis court	42.00	0.00	42.00
09.02.24	Lloyds Bank	Reserve account interest	12.27	0.00	12.27
16.02.24	I Moore	Community Bus (Feb)	88.00	0.00	88.00
23.02.24	Rowhedge walking RWFC	Rowhedge walking FPI	112.00	0.00	112.00
26.02.24		Football fun day (3 weeks Feb)	30.00	0.00	30.00
Total			1,875.87	0.00	1,875.87
EXPENDITURE FEBRUARY 2024					
Date	Payee	Description	Net £	VAT £	Gross £
19.02.24	BT Group	Landline DD	31.52	6.30	37.82
19.02.24	Page Computers	IT services CHQ 1958	80.00	16.00	96.00
19.02.24	Northumbrian Water	Water Allotments CHQ 1960	75.00	0.00	75.00
20.02.24	Staff	Salary & expenses (Jan) CHQ 1678	739.92	0.00	739.92
23.02.24	Community 360 Bus	Community Bus CHQ 1959	80.00	0.00	80.00
26.02.24	HMRC	PAYE (incl. 2018-23, Jan 24) CHQ 1961	303.13	0.00	303.13
26.02.24	R Long	Malting Green grass cut (Nov 23) CHQ 1665	75.00	0.00	75.00
28.02.24	EDF Energy	Electricity DD			30.00
Total			1309.57	22.30	1,436.87

MONTHLY RECONCILIATION	FEBRUARY	MARCH	Year End
Opening Cash Book	£ 43,461.84	£ 43,900.84	(projected)
Income	£ 1,875.87	£ -	£4,537.17
Expenditure	£ 1,436.87	£ -	£7,428.45
Closing Cash Book Balance	£ 43,900.84	£ -	£41,009.56
Reconciled to Bank Statement	Transfer 30K		
Lloyds Community Account	£ 32,772.48	£ 2,772.48	
Lloyds Reserve Account	£ 11,128.36	£ 41,128.36	
Total Closing Bank Statements(B)	£ 43,900.84	£ 43,900.84	

PAYMENTS APPROVED		
Staff	Salary & expenses (Feb-Mar)	1523.87
HMRC	PAYE (Feb-Mar)	444.20
Essex Pension Fund	Pension contributions (Jan-Mar)	891.47
Staff	Office/travel expenses	99.28
DM Payroll Services	Payroll administration INV 3403	180.00
CBC	Street lights INV 20204984	267.54
Strutt & Parker	Heather Fields annual rent	1418.09
S Priestland	Grass cutting (Feb)	55.00
Link Eleven Ltd	IT support (Feb) INV 5333	60.00
Link Eleven Ltd	website support (Feb) INV 5395	72.00
Community 360 Bus	Community Bus INV 689082	80.00

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Correspondence Received

Please see the latest edition of climate communications newsletter, containing the latest news coming out of the Council linked to environment and climate, grants for communities and residents and other support and resources which may be of interest to you or the residents you serve. As mentioned before, it is produced for city councillors, but much will be of relevance to town and parish Councils, and of course residents.

Of interest this month ECC through Travel Essex, have put out a **bus survey** (for users and non-users) to complete. It is for understanding public opinion of buses and ways service provision could be improved. Please could you share this opportunity to fill this survey in with residents and community groups - the link is [here](#) and **closes for responses on Sunday 17 March 2024**. Climate Emergency Officer

Following publication of the Call for Sites interactive map and report, it has been identified that there was need for some corrections in the data for a few sites where the proposed use was not showing correctly. We have now corrected this data, and this can be viewed on our [website](#).

It has also been identified that two sites were not showing on part of the published Call for Sites information, and these have now been included as part of the published Call for Sites data. These are the Roman River corridor (Green Infrastructure) and Land west of North Lane and North of Marks Tey Railway Station, (Residential). Planning Policy Team

Essex County Council are currently circulating a questionnaire to Parish Councils to help them develop a LEVI bid for the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging.

The focus of ECC's EV strategy is to get the right charger in the right place and to ensure that there is a fair and equitable distribution of chargers particularly in areas that might not be considered financially viable by the commercial sector or where residents have little access to off street charging.

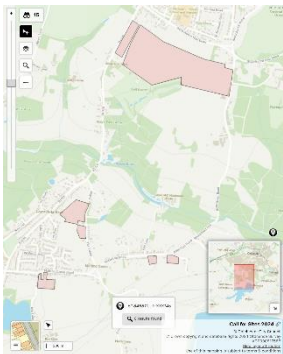
ECC want to explore opportunities for installing charging points in public spaces and would be grateful for your knowledge and help to identify potential locations for charging points in your area.

This is an opportunity for Parish Council's to be part of the bid being put together to potentially install electric charge points in your towns and villages, so please do complete the survey if you haven't already.

<https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/sustainable-travel-planning-team/18a76e64>

Free framed portrait of HM King Charles III has been ordered.

The major upheaval of the Solar installation has left our roads in a dangerous state. The road surface in Malting Green Road at the junction of Hawfinch has sunk. The verges all around the village have been desecrated leaving huge craters along the verges. This has been caused by the huge lorries/Plant etc. Grass at the front of my property is now mud thanks to the plant vehicles running over it while digging up the road. I'd like to know how and who is going to make and pay for repairs.



The Local Plan, which defines where development may take place in the future, is being reviewed by Colchester City Council and the results of the 'Call for Sites' has been published. These are sites put forward by their owners, or by developers, as proposals to Colchester Council, who will review them all in due course.

The attached map is from the Colchester Council website and shows in pink where people have submitted sites in or near Layer. The whole map can be seen on this link:

<https://colchester.opus4.co.uk/planning/localplan/maps/cfs-2023#/center/51.8824,0.799/zoom/13/baselayer/b:30/layers/annotations:0,o:11305>

It's not entirely clear from looking at the website how, or if, we as individuals can comment on the proposals, but no doubt we'll find out in due course.

Following our Planning Department's refusal of the recent phone mast application for our village, a new one has just been submitted which includes a few changes and a detailed "Landscape and Visual Appraisal" report. (The previous application was rejected on the grounds of the mast's visual impact.)

If you would like to see the mast installed in the village (and I think we are all in agreement that the mobile signal here is not good enough to be reliable), you might wish to support this application. You may be aware that the copper phone network is being withdrawn in 2025 and that landlines will have to use the internet. Therefore, if we don't have a good signal, we could be in trouble!

You can find the application (no 240297) here: <https://www.colchester.gov.uk/planning-app-details/?id=8c14d41d-62cb-ee11-9079-0022489b41c1#ValidationSummaryEntityFormView>

Concern regarding a constant alarm going off in the night at the Waterworks. Clerk has contacted Essex and Suffolk Water, the site manager is aware of reports about the alarm. There was a site visit and security have been informed and will do periodic checks. They will monitor the situation and investigate to see where the alarm is coming from. Essex and Suffolk Water are contactable 24/7 on the following numbers: 0800 090 2422 and 0345 717 1100.

I was very grateful that, when I contacted you about the last application for the above mast, you supported my view that residents should be informed about it, whatever their views.



I was therefore dismayed to see circulated by the Parish Network and reproduced on the Secret Layer site a message which only encourages actively supporting the current application without any note of caution.

The "Landscape Visual Appraisal" is not an independent one, and is clearly designed to lead residents and councils to believe that the mast is discreet. An example of this document's discrepancies with the reality of the plans is Viewpoint 06 Annotative Photo Montage, which deliberately minimises the intrusive nature of the mast and only has to be compared to the Planned Elevation, which shows the height above the existing (dead and dying) trees as considerable, and also shows that the mast and its base station are to be placed in front of, not behind, the trees, and are eminently visible.

Residents do not seem to be aware that this application does not have the landowner's approval, and, if the application is successful and if history repeats itself, is likely to take an indefinite number of years to negotiate. It would probably not be the quick fixed anticipated by the message on the Parish Network.

Now might be the time for the village to suggest a site for a mast which is more practical and which responds to the description of the mast as "a visually intrusive utilitarian structure within the rural landscape" (Colchester City Council Planning) by advocating the placement of such a structure in a utilitarian area of the village, such as that of the Water Works and the Solar Farm.

Use of parish office for community police base:

PC Speirs is looking at the possibility of a small pilot scheme, where his Colleague PC Adams and he would work from some of your parish council offices from say 10am-2pm on a rotational basis say once a month.

The idea would be to advertise in advance locally, to hold a drop-in session where people can pop in to see them, and also allow PC Spiers and PC Adams to speak with clerks and councillors face to face about any issues they may have.

In order for this to happen please can you advise me of the following:

- Which parishes would be interested?
- Which parishes have a dedicated office space that would be able to accommodate us i.e. desk space and secure Wi-Fi?
- If a dedicated office space isn't available is there a possible alternative location which is accessible, private and has secure Wi-Fi?

Commonwealth Day 2024

This year, Commonwealth Day is being celebrated on 11 March 2024, marking the 75th anniversary of the Commonwealth and designated as the Commonwealth Year of Youth. On this day, the Union Flag must be flown on UK government department buildings. Additionally, if there is a second flagpole available, UK government departments are encouraged to fly the Commonwealth Flag, if they have one. Many councils and other local organisations will have their own policy on the flying of flags, and they might choose to adopt similar practices. If you plan to fly the Commonwealth Day flag on 11 March, feel free to share a photo on your social media platforms and tag @UKinCW on X/Twitter. For more information, check out the government's [Union Flag flying guidance for UK government buildings](#).

Following the previous Parish Network email re the planning application, a resident who is not in favour of the scheme has been in contact to express their concerns about the visual impact of the mast on some residents.

Clearly, no scheme is ever going to be perfect for everyone and those who don't agree with this application, as well as those who support it, can of course respond accordingly on the CCC Planning website.

You can find the application (no 240297) here: <https://www.colchester.gov.uk/planning-app-details/?id=8c14d41d-62cb-ee11-9079-0022489b41c1#ValidationSummaryEntityFormView>

RCCE Membership Event

On Thursday 14 March 7.00pm till 8.30pm at RCCE offices in Feering, we are holding an event to promote the value of membership. This in person event will give you an opportunity to hear about work we do on your behalf, talk to staff members and network with each other. Tickets are free, please book here [RCCE Membership Event](#)

[Home Upgrade Grant](#) for improving the energy efficiency of homes **off the gas grid** for residents on low incomes living in cold energy inefficient homes. Funding can go towards various types of insulation, ventilation, heating (e.g. storage heaters, heat pumps) etc depending on what is identified as suitable for the home and within cost thresholds for the grant.

Key eligibility criteria: Residents living on **combined household income below £36,000 AND** have an **Energy Performance Certificate D or below** (check [here](#))

We have leaflets and posters, we can come and do community talks about the grants to tell people more and help people apply.

HUG website for further information and to apply - <https://hugapply.co.uk/>. Residents can also call 0808 196 8255 to apply by phone.

Email us at EnergyEfficientHomes@colchester.gov.uk

Colchester City Council

Climate Emergency Officer